

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

SERVICES IN AOTEAROA

INTRODUCTION

The development of early childhood services over the past 150 years has been a systematic, and at times daunting, task. Early childhood services did not derive from one singular philosophical base but rather grew out of a range of social, economic, political and cultural needs (Cook 1985). Within Aotearoa there exists over 20 different types of early childhood services (Meade 1988), which emphasises the diverse needs of the various interest groups within this society. Furthermore, the historical development of early childhood education within Aotearoa provides a picture of a society that was, and still is, clearly heterogenous.

The following chapter provides a discussion outlining the heterogenous nature of early childhood education within Aotearoa and the contesting ethnic, gender and class power relationships that are a part of the historical development of early childhood education. The first section ventures into some of the

literature surrounding Maori conceptualisations of the care and education of babies and young children, which is followed by a critical overview of the historical development of 'formalised' early childhood services in Aotearoa, ending with Te Kohanga Reo, undoubtedly the most empowering contemporary expression of early childhood education for Maori people.

A MAORI PERSPECTIVE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

It would be highly inappropriate to attempt to determine what is 'the' Maori view of early childhood education, as such a singular view does not exist. Maori people are not a homogenous thinking group rather we encompass a range of perspectives (Smith, L., 1990). Kathy Irwin (1992) wrote, concerning Maori women,

"In our work with Maori women we need to recognize that they, like any other community of women, are not a homogenous group. A number of factors influence Maori women's development: tribal affiliation, social class, sexual preference, knowledge of traditional Maori tikanga, knowledge of the Maori language, rural or urban location, identification on the political spectrum from radical to traditional, place in the family, the level of formal schooling and educational attainments to name but a few."
(Irwin, K., 1992:3)

The influences of such factors highlight the complexities that exist within groupings of Maori women and similarly such complexities are intrinsic to the ways in which Maori people have operated since colonisation. Therefore what is provided here is a result of writings surrounding the care and education of Maori children that have been expressed by Maori people of varied backgrounds and Iwi affiliations.

Many Maori writers position children and the education of children as being of particular importance within Maori society, such importance may be read within Te Reo Maori.

"Tamariki:Tama is derived from Tama-te-ra the central sun, the divine spark; ariki refers to senior most status, and riki on its own can mean smaller version. Tamariki is the Maori word used for children. Children are the greatest legacy the world community has."

(Pere, R.T.,1991:4)

From the time of birth the connection between the land and the child is made. The whenua (placenta) of the newborn baby is taken and placed into the whenua (Earth), such a procedure links the child to the land and establishes their turangawaewae. Pakeha practices surrounding the disposal of the placenta have caused some dismay to Maori people from as far back as the late 19th century as expressed by Teone Taare Tikao.

"When a child is born to the Pakeha, the doctor or nurse usually burns the placenta or afterbirth. The Maori did not do this,- it would be against the mana of that child and would destroy its mauri (life principle)...the whenua [placenta] was never burnt, but was carefully buried in the whenua (earth) and I think this is how it got its name, and by this burial the child's mauri and mana is preserved."

(Beattie, H. & Tikao, T.T.,1939:97)

The return of the whenua to the land also signifies a cyclical view of the world that espouses an ongoing link of the past to the present. As Maori we come from Papatuanuku and return to Papatuanuku, life and death are a continuum, thereby the preservation of the mauri and the mana of the child is crucial to the preservation of future generations. This view of the world is the basis of the beliefs and practices employed by Maori people in the care and education of their tamariki and according

to Arapera Royal-Tangaere (1991) expresses the importance of nurturing the child within a holistic philosophy.

The early education of the child was couched within the structure of 'whanaungatanga' (Te Rangi Hiroa 1949, Makareti 1986, Hohepa 1990, Ka'ai 1990, Pere 1991, Royal-Tangaere 1991). Particular members of the whanau were selected as kaitiaki of some forms of knowledge. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1986) states "knowledge was considered tapu and there were sanctions that ensured it was protected, used appropriately and transmitted with accuracy". The means by which knowledge was transmitted was through the varied forms of Whare Waananga and in the informal everyday teachings of life (kaa 1987).

For the child the earliest "personal instruction" was received from its male and female tipuna, this was made possible due to the whanau living arrangements (Te Rangi Hiroa 1949). The child lived within an environment that embraced at least three generations and was exposed to a lifestyle that allowed for their nurturing and education from their elders. Makareti (1986) describes how children were taught all aspects of life through living and sleeping with their parents, grandparents, granduncles through whom they would learn of folk-lore, traditions, legends, whakapapa, karakia and of their relationship to the land, sea, rivers, mountains, forests, birds and all aspects of nature. Te Rangi Hiroa (1949) also advances such a notion, and provides the following example.

"A friend of mine, little older than myself was brought up by a Grand-uncle who still thought that young chiefs

should be trained to become successful military leaders. They slept in the same room in separate beds. In the early mornings, the old man went outside to satisfy certain needs. On his return, he slapped the sleeping child and went back to his bed muttering his disappointment. This went on for some time, until one memorable morning the now apprehensive child heard the old man leave the room. When he returned to slap the sleeper, the child gazed up at him with wide open eyes. A pleased look came to the old man's eyes and he returned to his bed saying "Now I have a grandchild who will be a bulwark of defence to his tribe". After that they played a game. Some mornings the man got up earlier, others later, but always the child gazed up at him wide awake. The training had had its effect, and the child roused at the slightest sound."
(Te Rangī Hiroa, 1949:359)

The learning process for the young child took many forms and included both practical type exercises as outlined above, and through the medium of stories, games, waiata, karakia, whakapapa and much more, all of which provided the child with explanations as to their place in the scheme of things, their positioning in society, descriptions of places, events and people of historical significance, aspects of tribal lore necessary for the child to be knowledgeable of and the day to day expectations of them within the whanau.

The education of Maori children may therefore be expressed within a philosophy that seeks to prepare the child for all aspects of living and in order to ensure that each child will ultimately have the opportunity to take an active, participatory role within Maori society. Teaching and learning was not a "bits and pieces" process but was an "integrated developmental type of philosophy" (Pere, R.R., 1986:2), which sought at all times to acknowledge and validate the 'absolute uniqueness' of the child and their position in their whanau, hapu and iwi (ibid.).

According to Tuakana Mate Nepe (1991) the doctrine of Te Aho Matua provides a philosophical foundation for the education of the Maori child.

"Te Aho Matua is a philosophical doctrine that incorporates the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Maori society that have emanated from a purely Kaupapa Maori metaphysical base. As a product of the combination of Kaupapa Maori metaphysics and Maori societal relationships, Te Aho Matua sets standards and pedagogical procedures for the significance of Kaupapa Maori education as a system of intervention that is highly applicable today."
(Nepe, T.M., 1991:41)

Nepe provides a detailed discussion of Te Aho Matua and the six fundamental elements that it embraces: Te Ira Tangata, Te Reo, Nga Iwi, Te Ao, Ahuatanga Ako and Te Tino Uaratanga. Each element is connected in a philosophy that comprises a holistic perception of Maori children and their education.

Te Aho Matua establishes the imperativeness of positive educating of Maori children. The Maori child is a "descendant of Maori ancestry that link back to Io Matua Kore" and hence the nurturing, rearing of the child relates not solely to the child but to their entire ancestral lineage (ibid.). As a philosophy Te Aho Matua provides clear structures for the raising and education of the Maori child and operates from a Kaupapa Maori knowledge base that assumes the absolute validity of Te Reo and Tikanga Maori and which embraces concepts that instill a respect and love for the dignity of all people and languages. Furthermore Te Aho Matua locates all Maori people within the complex interrelationships that exist in Maori society, including: Iwi/Hapu/Whanau, Tipuna/Matua/Uri, Tohunga-

Tauira/Rangatira-Pononga, Kaumatua-Kuia, Matua-Whaea, Tuakana-Teina, Tuahine-Tungane, Tama-Tamahine, and Tipuna Whaea/Tipuna Matua-Mokopuna, establishing clearly defined relationships between Maori people (for indepth discussion refer Nepe 1991).

A final comment to be made at this point concerning Te Aho Matua is the inclusion within this paradigm for the assessment of Maori children within Maori defined and controlled procedures that ensure that the child will have access to the tools required to reach their "innermost, uppermost desires with holistic satisfaction". This process, Nepe contends, will ensure the maintenance of the childs "cultural sovereignty" and therefore their tino rangatiratanga (ibid.)

Early childhood education for Maori children within a Maori paradigm clearly exists and is based within knowledge that dates to pre-colonial times. The works of Maori women such as Rangmarie Turuki (Rose) Pere (1986,1991) and Tuakana Mate Nepe (1991) are contemporary expressions of kaupapa Maori education that is based fundamentally in Maori perceptions of knowledge, which incorporates the validation and legitimation of Te Reo and Tikanga Maori as paramount, and which is defined and controlled by Maori.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Early educational legislation in this country was on the whole directed at children from 5 years of age and were couched within

a need to establish a system of schooling that would provide education in line with the political agendas of the time. Clear examples of the political influences inherent within the establishment of schooling may be seen in the 1847 Education Ordinance and the 1867 Native Schools Act, both of which targeted schooling as a part of the wider colonial assimilation policy (Simon 1992) and the 1877 Education Act established settler Government control over a national system of the education of children over 5, as a response to "increasing neglect, homelessness and larrikinism amongst the children in the colony" (Cook 1985).

The apparent disregard of early childhood education may be associated with the dominant social expectation of the time that advocated womens role as a mother and primary caregiver (Gordon 1992). Such an expectation was however unrealistic for many working class women who needed to work for survival (Cooper 1990).

"From the 1870s the idealism of the rough colonial spirit began to be overlaid by vision of a more stable family life, but only middle class families were able to attain the ideal of a breadwinner's wage large enough to support a wife and family. For the rest of society women needed to work."
(Cook, H., 1985:16)

For these women the unavailability of early childhood services proved, at times, devastating. 'Baby farming', where children were 'farmed' out to other women, developed as the only option for working mothers. There was little documentation concerning this practice until the much publicised execution of Minnie Dean in Dunedin during 1885, after three of the children in her care

were found buried in her garden. The "outrage" that followed this event was focused on Dean herself and the wider social and economic issues surrounding the necessity of 'baby farming' received little attention (ibid.).

The first attempt to establish childcare within Aotearoa was in 1879 however this never eventuated and ten years later the Kindergarten Association was founded in Dunedin. Established by Pakeha middle class women the Kindergarten Association stressed "an educational component as a complement to the role of the mother " (Gordon 1992), and acted as a vehicle by which to assimilate working class mothers into middle class value systems, particularly in relation to domestic life (Heslop 1990). The philosophy of the Kindergarten Association differed considerably to that which had been espoused by the Creche Association ten years earlier, whose intention was to provide support for mothers who needed to work outside the home.

"The Creche Association had intended to give support to women who worked by offering them good care for their children. In contrast the Kindergarten had an emphasis on changing the values and behaviour of working class mothers towards middle class ideals."
(Cook, H., 1985:17)

The first creche opened its doors in 1903 in Wellington. Established by Mother Mary Joseph Aubert it was to become a part of the charitable services provided under the auspices of the Catholic Order of the Sisters of Compassion. Operating alongside the creche was a soup kitchen and a home for "incurables" (ibid.). Although working mothers were still frowned upon in this period, the charitable status of the creche increased its

acceptability as it was viewed as a "charitable mission that could quietly deal with what was seen as the seamier side of life" (ibid.).

This venture was followed in 1916 by the establishment of the Citizens Day Nursery, again Wellington, as a charitable trust. The centre developed in a time where there was growing social concern surrounding "deserted wives, widows and illegitimate children" (ibid.). Priority was given to single parents and their children with up to 50% of the roll being children of unmarried mothers (Cooper 1990, Cook 1985). The successful establishment of these two childcare facilities was clearly attributed to their charitable status, which may be viewed as a societal expectation that such centres would provide a vehicle of social control.

The Nursery school appeared in the late thirties, early forties. Modelled on the MacMillan sisters English Nursery schools, this concept was promoted through the New Educational Foundation however the full day provision was in conflict with the prevailing social view that children should, on the whole, be in the 'care' of their mothers and the Nursery school was rejected. The educational ideas of free play, creativity and individual development was revived in the 1940s under the umbrella of the Playcentre Association, which was a more socially acceptable model as a parent operated part day service (Cook 1985).

The onset of World War II brought a shift in social expectations of the role of women, particularly with the movement of women into the workforce for "an officially sanctioned cause" (Gordon 1992). During this time the American and British governments provided government sponsored day nurseries, however the New Zealand government did not provide the same service, rather extended Kindergarten sessions "in certain industrial localities" were provided (Cook 1985).

The post-war period saw the emergence of a belief that women should resume full time housewife, child rearing responsibilities. The resurgence of the ideology that womens place is in the home was met with some resistance from women who had experienced some degree of independence.

"The need for childcare assistance did not necessarily fade, and the heightened consciousness of women resulting from the war generated new demands for a better deal for mothers...As war ended and reconstruction and rehabilitation plans became the focus of life, women sought some relief from the everyday drudgery of childcare and housework... There was also the more explicit demand from women for some release from full time child rearing so they could be free to pursue other activities."
(Cook, H., 1985:22)

This era, however, did not merely see the emergence of contesting discourses of the role of women but it was also a time within which the concept of 'maternal deprivation' was actively promoted. According to Cook (1988) and Gordon (1992) the work of theorists such as John Bowlby promoted an ideology that espoused a "cult of motherhood" (Gordon 1992), that demanded that women reassume total responsibility for the care of children and the job of implementing new theories of child management, whilst

at the same time being the "anxious scapegoat" when things went wrong (Cook 1985).

Located within this period was the first government enquiry into early childhood services, the 'Bailey Report' (1947). Although contentious the report voiced a commitment to the need for early childhood services (Cooper 1990), however the report rejected full day services and validated the Kindergarten as the most appropriate form of early childhood education (May 1990).

By 1949 the government assumed financial responsibility for the funding of training and salaries of Kindergarten teachers and the partial subsidising of building and establishment costs (Cook 1985). The Playcentre movement was also growing and both Playcentre and Kindergarten "basked in general acceptance" (ibid.).

Full time child care remained socially unacceptable and continued in a private adhoc manner until 'baby farming' was again made visible through a "scandal" in Auckland in 1958. This prompted the development of 'The Childcare Regulations 1960' which came into effect in 1961. Regulations however emphasised physical safety and minimum standards including such things as the number of toilets and type of furniture. Little concern was held for childrens educational development and environment (Keay cited in Cook 1985, Cooper 1990, Gordon 1992). Childcare was placed under the auspices of the Department of Social Welfare in a "custodial context" which, Gordon (1992) argues, served to reinforce the

status of childcare as a welfare service, the role of which was to "preserve those children who were deprived of 'functioning' families".

In 1971 the 'Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Preschool Education' (Hill Report) followed a similar vein to the Bailey Report. Although the committee acknowledged the growing need for full time childcare services and the training of childcare workers, the emphasis remained with Kindergarten and Playcentre. Concerns of the inadequacies of the Hill Report prompted Sonja Davies to organise the inaugural meeting of the New Zealand Association of Childcare Centres (now known as the New Zealand Childcare Association, NZCA). The Association actively sought the improvement of the quality of childcare , funding, conditions and training (Cook 1985).

The 'second wave' of feminism in the 1970s elevated the issue of childcare provision to an issue of social justice that was linked to wider challenging of socially constructed gender roles.

"The politics of childcare also involved a reappraisal of values concerning the roles of men and women especially at the interface of social changes brought about by the restructuring of industry and new employment patterns; demographic factors such as falling birth rates; increasing urbanisation; better educational opportunities; and a new consciousness of opportunities for women."
(Cook, H., 1985:30)

The growth of the feminist movement saw childcare become a political issue (Cooper 1990).

In 1980 came the first government report focused primarily on childcare, the 'State Services Commission Report on Early Childhood Care and Education' (SSC Report). The SSC Report is described by Helen May Cook (1985) as a document that "caused both disquiet and optimism within early childhood education circles". The major recommendations of the report included the transferring of childcare from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education and issues pertaining to the funding of childcare services. The report was shelved for two years with the eventual move of childcare from the 'welfare' ranks to the Department of Education coming five years later in 1986 (ibid.).

The eighties signified a rapid growth of early childhood services, in what has been referred to as an era of 'do-it-yourself' strategies (ibid.). These strategies encompassed the unionisation of early childhood workers under the banner of the Early Childhood Workers Union (ECWU), the development of training packages for childcare workers and the development of Pacific Island language nests (Burgess 1990). Furthermore, Te Kohanga Reo emerged in full force and took the field of early childhood education by storm.

The most recent reforms of the early childhood sector can be found within 'Education to be More - Report of the Early childhood care and education working party' (The Meade Report) and the governments response to that report, titled 'Before Five' (1989). Helen May (1990) proposes that 'Before Five' promotes the

first major philosophical shift from the post-war emphasis on Kindergartens and Playcentre. The Meade report, May states, was born directly from the 1984 Labour government election promises to address the issues and concerns pertaining to childcare and encompassed two major "clusters" of recommendations, these being:

- (i) The application of a 'Picot' model of National guidelines, charters, Board of trustees, review and auditing and bulk grants.
- (ii) Bulk funding on a formula for each child-place up to twenty hours per week with weighting for children with special needs or under two. (May 1990)

The release of 'Before Five' saw a partial implementation of the Meade report recommendations. Charters and national guidelines were required to secure bulk funding, however Boards of Trustees were not required, a shift which May (1990) notes reflects the governments accommodation of "private enterprise and/or the profit motive" in the early childhood sector (ibid).

Early childhood education has been a site of contestation, debates of 'Care vs Education' and of womens' position in society have raged throughout the history of the early childhood movement. Until relatively recent times part-day services have been validated over full-day early childhood centres, this may be directly linked to dominant ideologies that locate women in the private sphere of domestic life and as primary caregivers.

"Early childhood services which release women from full-time child-rearing are political, not only because they cost money which has to be won along with other education funding, but also because they enable a

potential challenge to the power relationships between men and women in the home, the community, the workplace."
(May, H., 1990:108)

Evident within the histories of different early childhood services is the invisibility of Maori children and Maori peoples involvement in what have been, on the whole, Pakeha initiated and controlled services. Geraldine McDonald (1970) notes that in the 1960s there were very few Maori children enrolled in preschool facilities, and the number that did utilise early childhood education services prior to 1968 is unknown as statistics of Maori enrolment or attendance were not kept, however by 1968, 5.2% (1133) of all children in Kindergarten, and 9% (1161) in Playcentre were Maori (ibid.).

The involvement of Maori people in early childhood education during the late sixties and early seventies may be seen as a direct result of the deficit paradigms expressed through official channels such as the Hunn report. Cultural deprivation theories defined Maori homes as inadequate and as a consequence early childhood education was perceived as a means by which to compensate for the deficiencies of the home and provide the Maori child with the cultural capital required by the school (Royal-Tangaere 1991, McDonald 1973).

The Maori womens welfare league conference in 1961, and the 1962 Annual report of the Maori Education Foundation both stressed the importance of Maori involvement in preschool education and the perceived benefits of such for Maori children. The appointment

of Alex Grey, by the Maori Education Foundation, as a preschool officer saw the establishment of groups, mostly Playcentres that were run by Maori women. From these developed the family preschool or family play group, which involved mothers and their children attending regular sessions. The documentation of these groups in Waikato-Maniapoto, notes that the aim of family playgroups was to ensure that decision-making power concerning the pre-school education of Maori children remained in the hands of Maori people (McDonald 1973).

The Family Play Groups were however established within existing Pakeha structures of early childhood education the content of which differed little from that of other pre-school initiatives (ibid., Heslop 1990). One notable variation, however, was the emphasis on Maori people having input into how the groups operated which led to a focus on Maori values and practices (Pewhairangi 1983).

Throughout the sixties and seventies there was an increasing awareness of the fragility of Te Reo Maori. This was confirmed in 1978 by the research of Richard Benton which showed the numbers of fluent Maori speakers rapidly, this highlighted the need for the development of an early childhood service based specifically within a Maori epistemological view of the world (Ka'ai 1990). Te Kohanga Reo was to become that structure.

TE KOHANGA REO

Te Kohanga Reo developed as a Maori initiated and controlled early childhood institution. Tania Ka'ai (1990) notes

"According to the young academics of the time, the Te Kohanga Reo had their intellectual beginnings in the 1960s which Maori university students sought to perpetuate and enhance the still existing practice of grandparents rearing one or more of their grandchildren. At successive Maori students and young peoples conferences Maori-speaking grandparents were urged to foster and raise as Maori speakers one or more of their grandchildren. The aim was to bridge the widening gap between the bilingual Maori-English speaking older cohorts and their monolingual-English speaking descendants."
(Ka'ai, T., 1990:5)

The call for the revival of Te Reo Maori may be further traced to conferences such as the 1979 Wananga Kaumatua and the 1980 and 1981 Wananga Whakatauirā. The emphasis was on the retention of Te Reo Maori through a system of bilingual preschools. This was later modified by senior officials of the Department of Maori Affairs who proposed "an experiment in preschool education based on total immersion in Maori language and Maori family values" (ibid:6)

A pilot programme was undertaken in Pukeatua, Wainuiomata during 1981 and by December 1982 54 Te Kohanga Reo were in operation catering for over 900 Maori preschool children (ibid.) and by 1990 that figure had increased dramatically to include more than 540 Te Kohanga Reo (Huata 1991).

The historical development of Te Kohanga Reo has been well documented elsewhere (Jenkins 1986, Smith G. 1986, Ka'ai 1990, Hohepa 1990, Royal-Tangaere 1991, Nepe 1991) and discussion of the Kaupapa of Te Kohanga Reo has been outlined most succinctly by Tuakana Nepe (1991).

"Linked spiritually and philosophically to Io Matua Kore, Te Rangi Tuhaha, Rangiatea, Ranginui, Papatuanuku, Tane Mahuta and Hineahuone, the kaupapa of Te Kohanga Reo has its roots in the Maori metaphysical realm. From this Kaupapa Maori base too is derived Maori tino rangatiratanga - that which authenticates the unique existence of Maori people as the tangata whenua of Aotearoa.

Implicit in this kaupapa Maori knowledge of origins are wairua, mauri and tapu. All are strongly linked to Maori tino rangatiratanga. Tino rangatiratanga meaning Maori supremacy - Maori sovereignty, is fundamental to Maori identity and encompasses three dimensions, the wairua dimension; the kotahitanga dimension and the whanau dimension."

(Nepe, T., 1991:75-76)

Te Kohanga Reo is couched within a Maori epistemological world view that embraces the Maori child within a complex set of relationships and which validates a Maori framework that locates the child within dimensions of spirituality, solidarity and genealogical links.

Ka'ai (1990) , Hohepa (1990) and Royal-Tangaere (1991) advance three key objectives intrinsic to the kaupapa of Te Kohanga Reo. These key objectives are directly linked to an underlying assumption that asserts the validity and legitimacy of Maori language, knowledge, pedagogy and cultural practice (Smith G., 1988). Firstly, Te Reo Maori is the priority of the Te Kohanga Reo movement, the aim is the survival, retention,

ensure the maintenance of Te Reo Maori, Mana Maori Motuhake and Whanaungatanga, in ways that are defined by Maori for Maori.

The emergence of Te Kohanga Reo is a clear articulation that the assimilatory, deficit based programmes of the past have not worked to benefit Maori people and that the imposition of Pakeha defined education and educational policies is unacceptable and inappropriate for the advancement of Maori children and Maori people as a whole.

SUMMARY

Maori conceptualisations of the care and education of babies and young children have been impinged upon by the processes of colonisation and the undermining of traditional Maori structures, in particular the whanau. However, Maori knowledge of childrearing and education processes remain and is being increasingly expressed through a range of mediums.

Pakeha early childhood education services are numerous, the key institutions discussed here, Kindergarten, Play Centre and Childcare have been constructed within Pakeha cultural definitions and in relation to dominant group expectations of women and the positioning of women. The various modes of Pakeha early childhood institutions have developed within social, political and economic contexts, with ideological shifts concerning the position and role of women in society being influential in the determining of which forms of early childhood

institutions are viewed as socially acceptable.

Maori involvement within Pakeha early childhood education services was minimal until the mid 1960's, when the development of Family Play groups saw an influx of Maori participation. Family Play groups stressed Maori decision-making and brought about an increased emphasis on Maori cultural values and practices. However, Family Play groups remained located within a dominant group framework that viewed early childhood education as a means through which to compensate for 'deficits' within the home.

Maori aspirations for control over the education of their children evolved throughout the 1970's and culminated in the establishment of Te Kohanga Reo in 1981. Te Kohanga Reo emerged as a Maori initiative to cater for the needs of Maori people, in particular as a response to the rapid decline in the number of fluent speakers of Te Reo Maori. Defined and controlled by Maori whanau Te Kohanga Reo is based on Kaupapa Maori. Whanau consultation and decision-making is a hall mark of Te Kohanga Reo and is a process which promotes the politicisation, conscientisation and emancipation of Maori people through the validation of Maori cultural capital.